When you’re pulled in a thousand different directions, we’ll help you move forward.

Ortho’s transfusion medicine solutions are designed to help you overcome your lab’s challenges, so you can continue delivering safe transfusions—no matter what. Because every test is a life.
Apheresis: What the Evidence Supports and Where More Research is Needed

Specialists encourage continued use of clinical trials to establish the benefit of apheresis.

The Hard Reality of Histocompatibility

Demystifying HLA and the importance of consulting the experts.

Newer Therapies Could Boost, Supplement Therapeutic Plasma Exchange

Alternative or adjunctive therapies may be desirable for some of the diseases treated with therapeutic plasma exchange.
Apheresis Takes Center Stage

When the topic of apheresis comes up, it has become necessary to specify which particular aspect of apheresis. The procedure known as apheresis has become a broad category that encompasses therapeutic apheresis to remove something unwanted from a patient’s blood, the donation of blood components like platelets through apheresis and, increasingly, the use of the procedure to collect products for cellular therapy manufacturing. The April issue of AABB News focuses on various aspects of apheresis.

Conducting research in therapeutic apheresis is made more complicated by the multitude of rare conditions it is used to treat and the difficulty of finding sufficient patients to complete a study. The first feature article, which begins on page 10, discusses the research supporting therapeutic apheresis and notes the areas in which further research is needed.

One area in which therapeutic apheresis is commonly used is to prevent solid organ transplant recipients from rejecting the transplanted organ. The second feature, starting on page 16, covers the complex area of histocompatibility and HLA crossmatching, and describes procedures that can be used to predict which donor organs are best transplanted into which patients to decrease the need for apheresis in organ donation recipients.

Therapeutic plasma exchange is an important procedure that treats — but does not cure — most of the conditions for which it is used. A third feature article, beginning on page 20, discusses emerging alternatives to therapeutic apheresis and lists several adjunctive therapies, such as the monoclonal antibodies rituximab and eculizumab.

Fourth Edition of Apheresis: Principles and Practice

The fourth edition of Apheresis: Principles and Practice, the foremost textbook on apheresis is coming out in an expanded three-volume format, which will provide sufficient space to explore each area thoroughly. The first volume, which was published by AABB in December, covers therapeutic apheresis. The second, which should be out shortly, focuses on the collection of blood products through apheresis and donors. The third volume, which will be published this fall, will explore the emerging field of cellular therapy applications of apheresis. In addition to providing expanded information and more guidance than in the previous volume, the new three-volume format allows readers to purchase only the volumes that are relevant to their work.
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AABB members benefit by having access to a multitude of opportunities to volunteer their time and share their expertise. The various opportunities include committees, work groups, task forces and participation in various educational endeavors. Another key opportunity is the Transfusion Medicine Section and Subsections. “The Transfusion Medicine Section Coordinating Committee [TMSCC] is a great opportunity to learn from others and share your experiences, knowledge and expertise,” said Jeff Winters, MD, TMSCC chair. “I have learned so much being involved, which has helped me provide better patient care, all while making friends and contacts.”

The AABB Transfusion Medicine Section and its associated subsections are open to all AABB members. Membership usually entails meeting monthly and working on projects, and the group offers the chance for members to expand their networks. But unlike other volunteer opportunities provided by AABB, these positions give members the chance to select precisely how much time they wish to commit to the related activities. Some members choose to lead webinars and direct publication reviews, while others simply participate via listening into monthly or bimonthly conference calls.

The Transfusion Medicine Section comprises 10 subsections based on focused topic areas. The 10 subsections are:

- Clinical Hemotherapy
- Donor and Blood Component Management
- Global Transfusion Forum
- Leadership and Administrative
- Pediatric Transfusion Medicine
- Quality and Regulatory
- Technical Practices and Serology
- Therapeutic Apheresis and Transfusion Practices
- Transfusion Fellowship Directors
- Transfusion Safety and Patient Blood Management

Each subsection has a leader who is elected by subsection members and who can serve for up to two 3-year terms. Subsection members also determine the group’s projects. For instance, the Leadership and Administrative subsection conducted four webinars devoted to specific aspects of leadership, including leading through change, succession planning, virtual leadership and the characteristics of a leader. “Our subsection provides an open forum for likeminded individuals to freely discuss current issues, trends or needs related to leadership,” said Patrick Ooley, MS, MT(ASCP), CQA(ASQ)CMQ/OE, chair of the subsection. “Our members transcend all AABB disciplines, and we provide a great venue to share, learn and improve practices, bringing value to all who participate. Our goal is to provide a cost-free environment to develop and grow our leadership skillset,” he said.

The Transfusion Safety and Patient Blood Management Subsection meets every other month and devotes a portion of each meeting to the Journal Club, in which members review and discuss relevant studies and articles. Tracie Nichols, MS, MLS(ASCP)SBB, is the chair of the Quality and Regulatory subsections.
AABB Consulting Services can provide solutions to your unique needs

AABB consultants are highly trained, qualified experts in the fields of blood banking and transfusion medicine, cellular therapy, cord blood banking, translational research and regenerative medicine. We offer collaborative, custom-designed consultations and technical assistance to deliver the best possible outcomes, on time and within budget.

Contact AABB Consulting Services at aabb.org/AskConsulting for more information.

Some of our key services include:

- **TRAINING** – Ensuring compliance to required manufacturing practices for biologics

- **GAP ANALYSIS** – Identifying baseline to measure against regulatory and accreditation assessments, process improvements

- **BIOTECH** – cGMP training for donor qualifications and manufacturing
Subsection. She said, “The TMSCC has helped me to grow in my career and push myself to new levels. I have been able to learn and also teach others while being a part of several committees. It is nice to have a large network of colleagues to be able to poll whenever a new and challenging subject arises in order to receive many differing perspectives on the topic and come to a consensus on how to handle the issue.”

In 2020, most subsections were involved in revising titles from AABB’s Guideline series (now called “Guides”) from the 2000s, to bring them up to date with changes in practice and technology since they were first written. In the coming year, the Quality and Regulatory Subsection plans to focus its efforts on creating a webinar series and quality toolkits focused on root cause analysis, the use of different tools to affect change.

The Global Transfusion Forum brings together AABB members from around the world to discuss issues that affect countries in lower- and middle-income countries, as determined by the World Health Organization. The Forum works on projects focused on public policy, research and education that have been published in Transfusion, mainly through surveys of interested and known parties.

AABB provides a place for everyone to participate. To sign up for one or more of the subsections, AABB members can click on the “Get Involved” button on the AABB website and select “Committees and Sections” and then “Enroll in a Subsection.” This will update your profile to indicate the subsections in which you have expressed an interested. For more information concerning participation in a (or all) subsections, please contact AABB’s Standards Department at standards@aabb.org.
The collection comprises 31 relevant leadership and management programs on core concepts necessary to cultivate effective leaders.

Hand-selected by the Leadership & Administrative Subsection of the AABB Transfusion Medicine Section, this collection includes presentations from prior AABB Annual Meetings, on-demand eCasts and select chapters from AABB publications.

This collection covers three main areas:

- Best Practices
- Lead Your Staff
- Manage Your Resources

AABB Individual Member: $79

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“This material is fantastic to not only refresh current leaders, but also serve as essential curricula to develop future leaders. From communication, to employee engagement, to information and data, there are programs that bring value to today’s leaders and managers.”

PATRICK OOLEY, MS, MT(ASCP), CQA(ASQ)CMQ/OE
Chair of the Leadership and Administrative Subsection of the TMSCC

Visit aabb.org/leadership to learn more and register today!